

SOUTH AUSTRALIA.

**GOVERNMENT RESIDENT'S REPORT ON THE NORTHERN
TERRITORY, 1900.**

**GOVERNMENT RESIDENT'S REPORT on the NORTHERN TERRITORY
for the YEAR 1900.**

Northern Territory of South Australia: Office of the Government Resident,
Palmerston, May 20th, 1901.

Sir—I have the honor to submit my report on the condition of affairs in the Northern Territory for the year ending December 31st, 1900.

PASTORAL.

The following table sets forth the transactions which have taken place and the revenue received under the heading during the years 1899 and 1900:—

	1899.	1900.	Increase.	Decrease.
	Square Miles.	Square Miles.	Square Miles.	Square Miles.
Area held under lease	271,994	283,777	11,783	—
Area declared stocked	28,692	28,692	nil	nil
Area forfeited and surrendered.....	24,145	nil	nil	nil
Area applied for.....	153,472	11,755	—	141,717
Rents received	£11,326 13s. 1d.	£7,946 2s. 6d.	—	£3,380 10s. 7d.

The immense area of land held under lease and the small proportion which has been stocked—a state of things which has continued year after year for a considerable time past—is very disappointing, and points to the conclusion that in many cases those applying for the country had no intention of complying with the regulations in this respect, but acquired and held the land simply for speculative purposes. In this connection I would draw attention to the fact that blocks of country, aggregating 139,110 square miles, were taken up by two syndicates nearly two years ago, and I believe I am correct in saying that no attempt whatever has been made to stock them. The effect is that this vast area is withdrawn from the *bonâ fide* pastoralist, and, with great deference, I very much question whether the policy of granting leases of such enormous tracts of country is calculated to promote the legitimate development of the industry—unless indeed the provisions as regards stocking are strictly enforced; but, as a matter of fact, they have practically become a dead letter.

The effect of the removal by the Western Australian Government of the prohibition on the importation of stock has, as I anticipated in my report of last year, improved to a certain extent the prospects of our pastoralists—opening a market which has been closed for some time past to their fat stock—and I believe that a good deal of country has been taken up with the *bonâ fide* intention of stocking it in order to take advantage of the outlet.

The severe drought from which many parts of the Territory has suffered during the last season, combined with the Western Australian demand for stock, has resulted in a considerable increase in the price of beef cattle, and those who have been fortunate enough to possess any to sell have been able to dispose of them at highly remunerative rates.

I notice that a meeting of gentlemen interested in the Northern Territory was held lately in Melbourne, with a view of taking steps to establish meat freezing works on the Victoria River.

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The tailings at the Brock's Creek Gold Mine, which were expected to yield from 15dwts. to an ounce of gold per ton by means of the cyanide process, have disappointed the management, and I understand are too poor to treat. I believe that the company has reconstructed with more capital, so we may expect that works of development will proceed. Hitherto it has been starved for the want of capital.

ABORIGINES.

I would again venture to press upon the Government the desirability—I would go further and say the absolute necessity—of introducing legislation dealing with the subject.

The state of things which exists as regards the relations between the natives and the white and colored races in the Northern Territory continues most unsatisfactory. The Government are aware that, however injurious this may be so far as the welfare of the natives is concerned, the authorities have no power to interfere unless offences against the criminal law are committed. As I said in my report of last year when dealing with this matter, the report of the Select Committee of the Legislative Council recognises the absolute necessity for legislative interference.

I may add that I have had an opportunity of perusing the report of the Protector of Aborigines for North Queensland, who administers an Act in force there, which is on similar lines to the Bill introduced in the South Australian Legislative Council, and it shows that the Act is a success, of great benefit to the aborigines, and does not operate in any way to the detriment of the *bona fide* employer of black labor.

PEARLSHELL FISHING.

One hundred and seventy-four tons of pearsells of declared value £22,674 were exported during the year, as against 211 tons, value £29,509, for 1889, the decrease being 36 tons.

The Hon. the Minister granted a subsidy to four of the pearling boats to proceed on a prospecting cruise on the coast to discover fresh beds. They were engaged in this work for about three months, but were unsuccessful in discovering any, though shell was found at different places on the coast. Unfortunately, owing to the state of the weather, the water was unusually dirty, and impeded successful operations.

The fishing has been confined for some years past to the same waters in the vicinity of Melville Island, and in the harbor.

The returns seem satisfactory to those engaged in the enterprise, otherwise no doubt more systematic efforts would be made to prospect our extensive coast line.

I understand some very valuable pearls have been obtained from time to time during the year. The Sub-Collector points out the advisability of a law being passed for the licensing of buyers of pearls, and I think it would be well if something of the kind were done.

CUSTOMS RETURNS.

The gross value of exports during the year, as shown by these returns, is £162,170, being an increase on the previous year of £3,552.

The total value of imports during the year was £139,770 14s. 9d., as against £129,488 8s. 11d. for the year 1899, being an increase of £10,282 5s. 10d. This increase the Sub-Collector points out is due to the value of imports of jetty material imported from South Australia, and would come under the heading of manufactures of South Australia.

The gross revenue for the year shows a decrease of £4,858 6s. 4d., the figures being for 1900 £31,323 19s., as against £36,182 5s. 4d. for 1899.

The year has been one of great depression in every line of business, and it is satisfactory that in such adverse circumstances the revenue has been so well maintained.

APPENDICES.

The reports of heads of departments, also the rainfall return for the year, courteously furnished by the senior and inspecting officer (Mr. J. A. G. Little), are annexed.

I have, &c.,

CHAS. J. DASHWOOD, Government Resident.

The Hon. the Minister Controlling the Northern Territory, Adelaide, South Australia.

Value of Work done by the Prisoners for other Government Departments and the Public for the Year ended December 31st, 1900.

	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Cash earnings.....	—			11	9	0
Items for which no credit has been allowed—						
Prisoners working in the Botanical Gardens, reckoning their earnings at 1s. 6d. per day per prisoner	160	14	6			
Guard in charge, at 9s. 6d. per day	104	18	6			
				265	13	0
Prisoners repairing roads, at 1s. 6d. per day per prisoner	25	10	0			
Guard in charge, at 9s. 6d. per day	9	10	0			
				35	0	0
Prisoners clearing rifle range, at 1s. 6d. per day per prisoner.....	15	3	6			
Guard in charge, at 9s. 6d. per day	6	13	0			
				21	16	6
Supplying firewood to other Government departments.....	—			64	10	0
				£398	8	6

The above earnings were irrespective of the usual work done in improving and keeping in repair the gaol premises and surroundings.

Fannie Bay, January 7th, 1901.

GEORGE W. H. NORCOCK, Gaoler.

CHARITABLE INSTITUTIONS.—MEDICAL OFFICER AND PROTECTOR OF ABORIGINES' REPORT.

Palmerston, 1901.

Sir—I have the honor to respectfully submit to you my annual report for the year 1900 for the institutions under my charge.

HOSPITAL.

During 1900 the number of admissions into the above institution was sixty-five, of which forty-seven were Europeans, three Japanese, eleven aborigines, two Chinese, one Philipino, and one Malay. There were five deaths, the remainder being discharged cured or relieved, or were present in the wards at the close of the year. The causes of death were—

Epithelioma of rectum.....	1
Cerebral softening	1
Alcoholism	1
Phthisis.....	2

Following the epidemic of measles were various lung diseases among the aborigines, two of them died of phthisis; others were discharged at their own request, the number of cases of phthisis being unusually large; of the remainder malaria and surgical cases formed a large proportion.

QUARANTINE.

No foreign epidemic having visited our port, the Quarantine Island was not put into use as such. In view, however, of the prevalence of the plague in the southern colonies, it was deemed advisable to set apart a reserve near Point Emery, which could be used as a quarantine station for any cases that might happen to break out in the town, the intention being to utilise the Island for any cases that might arrive from over sea. Fortunately, however, the need for use of either did not occur.

DESTITUTE.

Very little work was needed in this department among the Europeans. Among the Asiatic races, however, cases were treated from time to time.

GAOL.

The mortality for 1900, as for 1899, at the gaol was nil. Ailments of a minor nature were common, and at one time nearly all the inmates were attacked with a mild form of influenza. Hygienic arrangements have been carefully attended to, and it is in a large measure due to this that cases of a serious nature are so rare.

ABORIGINES.

There is very little to report in regard to this department. At the annual distribution of blankets in May over 300 natives attended, and it was a striking feature of this gathering that the proportion of children as compared with adults was very low. This points out, I think, to the fact that, as in other civilized parts of Australia, the aborigines here are on their way gradually to extinction. A mission station, with Mr. Lennox at its head, has been started in the Alligator River district, but it is too early yet to estimate any result from the movement. Between Port Darwin and the Katherine are over sixty half-caste children of various ages, and I would strongly urge that as soon as possible provision be made that they can be removed from their surroundings and educated to a certain extent, so that ultimately they may be useful members of society, and not—as too often happens when allowed to run wild in the blacks' camp—become a source of danger to the community.

I have, &c.,

F. GOLDSMITH, Government Medical Officer and Protector of Aborigines.

His Honor the Government Resident.

MARINE.